

**Conference proceedings “Romans meet the Vikings”
18/12/2004**

First part

1. *Introduction: Rachele Caputo*

Items on agenda and list of speakers:

- Mayor of Ozzano dell'Emilia
- Counsellor Luca Lelli
- Dott. Ssa De Santis
- Archaeologist Claudio Negrelli
- School Principal Lamberto Montanari
- Presentation of Virom' web pages
- Q & A between archaeologists and pupils

2. *Mayor*

Appreciation and satisfaction about the good work done with the VIROM-project. Thanks for the work and the results achieved so far and wishes for the activities scheduled for the next months.

3. *Culture Counsellor*

He remarks the importance of this European project since it is the first time that Ozzano dell'Emilia takes part to this sort of activity with the twinned town of Staffanstorp and Wolin, Poland.

The VIROM-project emphasises the importance and the values of the art treasures in the archaeological sites of the three Towns involved. Also the involvement of the archaeologist as well as that of the local pupils and the the artists is very significant.

4. *School Principal*

Appraisal for the good work done by the pupils and the teachers, as an evidence of a continuous research for new and better teaching methodologies and organisational abilities.

Cultural projects, Innovation and experimentation of new teaching methodologies are relevant aspects of the teachers' activities in this school.

We are particularly fond of the VIROM-project, because of it is strictly tied with the territory of Ozzano its people, culture, history, the schools and the national and local public institutions. On the other side we have the important work with the European partners, that permit us to know and get in touch with different cultures and ways of working.

5. *Italian Monuments and Fine Arts Office – Ms De Santis*

Thanks to everybody

We have created a permanent joint work among the Municipality, the Schools and the Monuments and Fine arts Office. This joint effort will help the people and the students to better understand not only the history, but the origins, and the historical context faced by our ancestors. This is the best way to show that history is not only something written in schoolbooks, but is an important way to better know who we are and where we are going.

I wish that in future we will be able to build a museum in order to expose all the Claterna finds and I am also looking forward to the public opening of the Claterna archaeological site in order to let people see with their own eyes where Claterna was, and where and how the ancient Romans used to live.

6. *Archaeologist Claudio Negrelli*

Our archaeological team-work is composed by a lot of people, we have archaeologists, students, and graduates. So far we have been working on two “core” purposes: the first one involves the schools and concerns information and education of the pupils about history and archaeology related to Ozzano and Claterna. The second purpose concerns the cataloguing of Claterna finds and the relative inventory, drawing and photos.

7. *Presentation of VIROM website” – Rachele e Stefano*

Tasks and features of the pages:

- Description of the project, steps, participants, expected results and outcomes.
- Timetable: detailed representation of each step and related time of conclusion and explanation of the main steps (students, administration, artists, touring exhibition, etc.)
- Presentation of the involved Countries with photos, descriptions, etc.

Q & A between students and archaeologists

1. *Q. Which is the main task of the VIROM-project?*

A: The main task of the European VIROM-project is to reconstruct and show the history of an ancient civilisation (Claterna in our case), show and explain how to carry out an archaeological research and the study of its finds.

2. *Q. Who works on this project?*

A: The Municipality of Ozzano dell'Emilia, the archaeologists, the School Principal, the teachers, the pupils of the first and third years of the Secondary School that have chosen to do this extracurricular work.

3. Q. *What have you done in this first part of the project?*

A: The topic was “ways of life and living in Italy and Claterna during the Roman Age”

We spoke about archaeology and its methods, we spoke about the Celts, the Etruscans and the Romans, in particular we spoke of their houses, their eating habits and lifestyle.

We also spoke about Claterna through the analysis of some finds found in recent times.

We had a total of 8 lessons of two hours each with the archaeologists, during the morning lessons the teacher and some students have worked on the notes taken during the lessons and have made a summary of the main parts.

At the same time our papers were translated into English by the third class pupils with the help of the English teachers.

At this point our work is ready to be delivered to the webmaster of the VIROM-project and to be shared with our Swedish and Polish correspondents. This is the end of the first part of our work with the VIROM-project.

The second part will take place in January 2005 with a three hours lesson about the Middle Ages, and a practical activity, i.e. the making of drawings of buildings, objects, or part of the town in order to realise a virtual “*Guide of Claterna*”. These activities will be managed with the help of archaeologists and teachers.

Only a limited group of students will be involved in the practical activity, they will be selected through a school contest. The items produced by the pupils will be exposed in the touring exhibition scheduled for April and May 2005.

4. Q. *We know that archaeology helps in reconstructing history with enough precision; Does archaeology only help in reconstructing material evidences, or is it useful also for others aims?*

A. Archaeologist Roberta Michelini: first of all, the work of an archaeologist starts with the visible evidence left by men, and makes use of all the available information conveyed by these evidence. There are lots of different types of evidence: manufactured articles, building structures, and also “negative evidence” meaning the things that existed at a certain time but now don’t exist any longer . So archaeology works with a lot of different evidences, all coming from the ground, so archaeologists work on the ground.

The processing of the claimed data allows the archaeologist to reconstruct what cannot be seen anymore; let’s take a building, for example: normally with an excavation the archaeologist finds the foundations and the floor, but it is rather impossible to find the walls and the roof (it may happen but it is very difficult). So, starting with the foundations and claiming all the related information, the archaeologists are able to make an hypothetical but realistic reconstruction of the entire building. This is possible because we also have other evidence that help us. For example the technical competence of the analysed age are an important indicator, and also the drawings and the paintings of Pompei and Ercolano show us the standing buildings . The information processing can produce a quite reliable reconstruction, hence we can say that starting from what could be found in the ground we can get to something very similar to the original.

5. Q. *We have studied that Rome was the result of the crossing of the main communication roads and that Claterna was founded near the Via Emilia; Did the Vikings too built their towns in strategiacal communication points?*

A. Archaeologist Ms. Roberta Michelini: this is a good question because it refers to the criteria that man has adopted since ancient time to choose the areas where towns were to be built. In order to live man needs some fundamental things, first comes survival, or the possibility to eat. Therefore the first choice is that of a territory where fruit and vegetables grow easily and where animals can be bred and above all where water can be found. Rivers are an essential favourable element; then comes another important element the presence of communication courses because large roads mean many people going by and the result of these two elements is spontaneous aggregations that with the time can develop into towns because in these joints, exchange markets can come to life and become meeting points of peoples and cultures. Our original project deals with the comparison and the similarities of the Viking and Roman life styles and the mixing of cultures is part of our approach. We know that these two peoples bore different cultures, different civilisations that developed also in slightly different periods of time. But the way man tends to settle on the territory is almost physiological as settling is a need common to every population. It is a constant also in different civilisations that developed in different territories at different ages and times.

6. Q. *So far have you found in Claterna more or less finds than in other towns founded in the same age?*

A. Archaeologist Mr. Maurizio Molinari.

For many years Mr. Molinari has been a dedicated researcher in the area of Ozzano and in particular of Claterna.

It's not possible to quantify the exact quantity of material that has been found so far. Let's say that Claterna was lucky and unlucky at the same time, as in the 4° or 5° century A.D Claterna did not exist anymore when other towns (as Bologna and Imola) were still active. In Imola for example we can find Roman floor at 2,50 meters in the ground, which means that the town has been growing on itself during the centuries. This means also that many things of the Roman's age have gone lost during excavations for the constructions of buildings and streets etc. Luckily for us Claterna is still as it used to be. We can still find the things where they were left in their time even if most of the outer walls were recycled in the following centuries. The floors instead were mainly left untouched, the roads and the roads plant are in pristine conditions and this has given us the chance to find many nice objects which are rarely found in larger towns, or only when new buildings are built and in that case, when deep excavation occur the Roman ground comes to light and new things are found.

7. Q. *How did you become an archaeologist, was it difficult or easy? When was the best moment?*

A. Alessandra Tedeschi, archaeology student: to become an archaeologist you have to study at the university, take a master and then hope to start working for a firm or work on excavations with the

university. In my experience the best moment I can remember was when I took part to some excavations with the university in Pompei.

A. Michela, archaeology student: I am still an undergraduate at the university, I still cannot call myself an archaeologist. The interesting moments have been many during the excavations I have taken part to even if I haven't taken part to many of them.

8. *Q. Among the food and the drinks of the ancient Romans there were also beer and wine, but you told us that the Romans did not drink alcohol. The beer and wine they used to drink were not alcoholic then?*

A. archaeologist Roberta Michelini: we meant heavy drinks as whisky, brandy etc. that you can find in modern times. Very alcoholic substances that imply kinds of processing that were not possible in the ancient times; beer and wine are indeed alcoholic drinks but they have a low alcohol content. I told you that wine was never drunk alone but always mixed with other substances such as water or honey creating tastes and drinks that are now forgotten and very different from our tastes.

9. *Q. Is there the intention to set up a museum for Claterna in Bologna?*

A. dott.ssa De Santis: at the Civic Museum of Bologna it is certainly possible . Let's say that this project was set up within the "Soprintendenza Archeologica" that is a state institution, and in this context you should ask this question to the National Archaeological Museum, but obviously the question concerns the Museum of Bologna because the finds of Claterna are kept in that Museum. At this point the visit can be thought and led by the archaeologists, but unfortunately at this moment I do not know whether the room has been set up or not.

10. *Q. We do now know how the houses were made in Claterna, but how were made the Vikings' houses?*

A. Archaeologist Claudio Negrelli: very interesting question. As a matter of fact the Vikings' building tradition is the building tradition of the Northerners, but we should not forget that the Romans and the Vikings are chronologically contemporary, they did not live exactly in the same age but the Vikings used mainly wood, and what we know for sure is that they built their house with wood using poles that could be set in the ground. From those poles were built the walls and the other main structures of the building. I remember that during our visit to Sweden with the school's principal and the other officials of the Municipality we were taken to a guided visit to the site of Uppåkra where we could clearly see the holes left in the ground by the poles that imply this kind of architecture. Another way to build wooden buildings, typical of the northern population was the podium technique. They used to build a stone podium and then they set up a building made of wood. This kind of architecture is still visible nowadays. They consist in a wooden frame filled with various and different building materials. Also the Romans knew these building techniques with wood and we have seen some Roman houses with structures made of wood and other materials.

11. Q. *How were the goods transported at the time of the Roman Empire? Which goods came from Claterna?*

A. Archaeologist Roberta Michelini: The transport system were very similar to ours with a few recent exceptions such as the aeroplane and the railway that did not exist. The road was the most common transport system as there were many roads and all the main centres as well as the small landlocked villages could be reached. Land transport meant a cart carried by animals. Also sea transport was very common but the inland towns and villages could not be reached by sea therefore ships were used to reach the furthest parts of the empire. From the largest ports sailed the ships that carried food as well as building material or expensive cloth that came from the east. In the Roman tradition the east meant a place from where many objects that were considered culturally or socially precious. The ships could sail through the canals, through natural rivers or through artificial canals open for transporting the goods on water. A case in point is the canal system that joined the town of Ravenna to the Venetian area. It developed across the land valleys that ran parallel to the coast, the goods were transported on large barges pulled by animals that walked on roads that run parallel to the same canals. Many building stones were delivered in this way from Veneto and Trentino to Emilia Romagna. For example the roads paved with "basoli" were made with Venetian stones; In a later phase white marble was very used. White marble came from Verona or from Istria. These materials could also be transported through an internal water system. Claterna received building material. We do not have any specific information on the architectural elements, but certainly stones were used that came from our Apennine or even better from Tuscany, from the Apuan Alps that were very rich of marble and valuable building limestone. Also wine and oil, volcanic stones from central Italy that were used to build millstones, ceramics were imported. There were many exchange goods, from food to manufactures.

12. Q. *When and how did you realise that under those fields there could be the ruins of Claterna.*

A. Archaeologist Maurizio Molinari: the first official trace of the presence of archaeological material in Claterna dates back to the end of the 19th-century. In the State Archive of Bologna there are drawings of the 18th-century where the area was already marked as "Claterna o Quaderna" ancient town; already in the 17th-century the area was known as an archaeological area and probably as in that age ploughing was not very deep the material was at very close to the surface. Another survey of the 17th-century affirms that the farmland in that area was excellent, which meant that the presence of man and animals had made it very fertile. In the 20th-century in the twenties some accurate excavations were carried out and some mosaic floors were brought to light as well as structures and buildings. In the 19th-century Brizio had already talked with the farmers who worked in the area of Claterna and they all had reported the finding of manufactures, ceramics, blocks of marble during the ploughing. The historic memory of the town was therefore quite relevant and a geographic reference point was created, even if the town had disappeared. It is because of this historical memory that we still know with great precision where the town is located.

13. Q. *Why did you chose this job?*

A. Students : Alessandra e Michela: For passion and pleasure in knowledge

A. Dott.ssa De Santis: What are we investigating in the past? Our identity, a sense of belonging and those certainties that we won't find in present times. We like to think of a past when things happened slowly people had more time to think and relate. Culture was closer to daily life (..) In the ancient time the material was much more important and considered as it is today. Today the production and processing process is much more important than the material.